

## BIPOLAR ELECTROSURGICAL INSTRUMENT FOR CUTTING, DESICCATING AND SEALING TISSUE

### Cross-Reference to Related Application

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This application is a continuation-in-part of complete application Serial No. 10/188,207, filed July 2, 2002, *now abandoned* and is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

### Background of the Invention

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I. **Field of the Invention:** This invention relates generally to electrosurgical instruments, and more particularly to an improved forceps whose jaws are especially designed to facilitate selective cutting, desiccation and sealing of tissue structures without the need for an instrument exchange.

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II. **Discussion of the Prior Art:** The prior art is replete with electrosurgical forceps for use in open and laparoscopic procedures to cut through tissue structures, desiccate the tissue and any blood vessels to stem bleeding and for creating a fluid-tight seal between tissue structures along the margins of a cut. The Stern et al. Patent 5,443,463 describes a coagulating forceps for use in open  
20 procedures in which the cooperating faces of its opposed jaws are generally planar and support a plurality of electrodes on one jaw and temperature sensing elements on the opposed jaw. Cutting of tissue is by way of a sharp blade that is actuated following electrocoagulation on opposed sides of the cut line.

25 The Fineburg Patent 5,458,598 describes an endoscopic cutting and coagulating device, which, like the Stern '463 device has opposed jaw members whose opposed jaws are generally identical, each having a U-shape defining a central slot and with generally planar, albeit serrated, mating faces. A mechanical, sharpened blade, when actuated, passes longitudinally through the central slot following coagulation on each side of the cut.